

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 15, 18, 22, 25, 28, and 29 have been amended. Claims 2 and 32 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, claims 1, 3-31, and 33-47 are pending and under consideration.

Rejection of Claims 1, 27, and 30 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,069,346 issued to Hyllberg in view of JP 2001-265149 to Kawamura et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Kawamura").

In the first paragraph of page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicates that claim 2 includes allowable features. Applicants amend independent claim 1 to include the allowable features of claim 2. Therefore, for at least this reason, claim 1 is patentably distinguishable from the cited references.

Claims 27 and 30 depend from claim 1 and include all of the features of claim 1. Therefore, for at least this reason, claims 27 and 30 are also patentably distinguishable over the cited references.

Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Objection to Claims 2-26, 28, and 29

On page 4, the Office Action objects to claims 2-26, 28, and 29 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. As discussed above, independent claim 1 is amended to include the features of claim 2, and claim 2 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 3-8, 12-14, and 18-19 depend from claim 1 and include all of the features of claim 1. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 3-8, 12-14, and 18-19 depend from an independent base claim containing allowable features instead of a rejected base claim.

Claims 9, 15, 22, 25, 28, and 29 have been rewritten in independent form and contain allowable features as indicated on page 4 of the Office Action. In addition, claims 10, 11, 20, and 21 depend from independent claim 9, claims 16 and 17 depend from independent claim 15, claims 23 and 24 depend from independent claim 22 and claim 26 depends from independent claim 25. Dependent claims 10, 11, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23, 24, and 26 depend from their respective independent base claims containing allowable features instead of a rejected base claim.

Accordingly, for at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claims 3-26, 28,

and 29 patentably distinguish over the references and withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Summary

Claims 1, 3-31, and 33-47 are pending and under consideration. It is respectfully submitted that none of the references taken alone or in combination disclose the present claimed invention.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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